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Giuseppe Mazzini's "geopolitics of liberty" and Italian foreign policy toward "Slavic Europe"

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During the first half of the 19th century Western Europe looked with growing interest at the other half of the Continent, and especially at the emergence of a large Slav world that the rest of Europe had never appreciated before in all its breadth and complexity. Naturally there had been long-standing relations with many of its peoples, especially for an Italy that faced both the Adriatic sea and the Danubian world, and thus found herself placed in a crucial geopolitical arena close to them. (1) But, in practice, Russia herself, the most important Slav Power, had only recently been really "discovered" by the West as a result of the major role that it had played during the Napoleonic wars and because of the entrance of Tsarist armies in Paris, in Vienna, and in our Peninsula. Moreover, after the Congress of Vienna, Russia had itself become a Continental protagonist of the first order.

So now that matters had calmed down after the long period of disturbance, the Europe of the Restoration observed with increasing concern the revival of Russia's former expansionist tendencies, especially those towards the South and the West that recalled old fears. All this at a time when the entire Slav world--and thus also the smaller Slav peoples, whom other Europeans had only recently been getting to know and to study--was beginning to become the focus of increasing European attention. Only now, and partly as a result of the development of linguistic studies, were they being discovered as individual nations and yet also as nations all stemming from a single racial

stock. The reactions to these discoveries oscillated from sympathy to interest to concern.

Both the big Western states that had already succeeded in constituting themselves as nations during the previous period, and also an Italy that was itself aspiring more than ever before to achieve its own unity and independence, soon showed themselves sensitive to the problems and expectations of a Slav world in ferment, in which there was growing national consciousness and growing demands for recognition of their specific identities, for autonomy and also for independence. And soon there began to be recognition that the Slav problem was much bigger than just those posed by the Magyars or the Romanians who were engaged in the fight for unity and independence against Austria and Turkey. In this case, they found themselves faced with a whole range of peoples posing problems on a large scale and the solutions to which would have profound implications for the "European equilibrium" that had been established at the Vienna Congress.

Would the Slav peoples work, above all, to establish their own distinct identities as separate Slav nations? Or would they instead search for a solution that would unify them in a single, huge nation? And, if the latter were to prevail, which of the Slav nations would succeed in acting as the coalescing force for the other "sisters"?

For centuries, Russia had essentially been closed in on itself. Since Peter the Great, it had had occasions to appear to Europe in a positive role, as a bulwark against Ottoman, Habsburg, and Napoleonic expansion; but now Nicholas I appeared as a real symbol of political and social conservatism. In the meantime, and after the harsh repression of the Thirties uprising, Polish emigres had widely publicized through the Continent a new sense of national consciousness and ever greater requirements for freedom.

Together with the still not yet extinguished echoes of the Crusade theme, and of the idea that Slavs could once more play a crucial role in the definitive removal of Turkey from the Continent, there was also persistent Western fear of the Russian giant. The East, the Slavic world, the new places where it was possible to exercise Europeans' Romantic taste for exoticism were now watched with a mixture of enthusiasm, hope and concern. After all, they were only now being truly "discovered" as a part of Europe. And they exerted the charm of those herderian themes that had had so great a following on the Continent, romantically insisting on the heavy burden of the numerous problems accumulated by the old European civilization, and on the decisive role that could be played by the "most recently arrived peoples," masses full of "virgin" energy and less "worn out" than the West.

Certainly, knowledge about these countries was still scarce and defective--for instance, there were some people who thought that even the Romanians were Slavs. But, also if often confusedly, there was the feeling that on the whole, East-Central Europe had a series of common features, and that in that part of the Continent the Slavic masses were undoubtedly the dominant group from a numerical viewpoint. Questions also began to be raised as to what would happen in the future when the small Slavic peoples would succeed in getting free from their subjection to supranational empires, Habsburg and Ottoman. Could they resist the appeal of Russia? The fears stirred up already in the first half of the 19th century by this possibility would later become stronger as a result of the Crimean War, and were to pervade the entire century, emphasising the image of a Europe divided between a liberal West and a despotic East.

These concerns animated the policies of the Western powers, including Italy, visited as she was by many emigres--especially Poles--and engaged in a similar effort to obtain national unification and independence. Moreover, there was the common Habsburg enemy, and so many Slavs were Italy's "natural allies" in that zone: the connection between the Italian Risorgimento and the "Eastern question" was thus a natural one, and had been already made explicit in On Italian Hopes of the neo-Guelph and pro-Polish Cesare Balbo. This book had circulated in the Peninsula after 1844, (2) and had emphasized the idea of "driving Austria eastwards." The Habsburgs had to be encouraged to develop more and more their interests in the East, toward the Danubian-Balkan area, thus taking them away from Italy. To that end, the Russian specter could be aroused and this would then underline the need to prevent a Tsarist predominance in Europe. Austrian rivalry against Russia would thus be encouraged.

Consciousness of this connection came to be felt at all levels during the Risorgimento, touching public opinion in a diffuse way--in the beginning in often confused forms, but afterwards more and more clearly. In Italy, the same mixture and characteristic coexistence of expectations, sympathies, interests and fears towards Slavs was also created, as well as the romantic idealization of those who might appear as the "nearest exotic" for us, in an "alternation of ideology and realism." (3) However, the greatest attention to the Slav revival came especially from those Piedmontese who wished to lead the Risorgimento: in this context there was a strong interest in creating anti-Habsburg alliances or diversions.

In Italy there existed, in particular, widespread sympathies for the Poles: people across the political spectrum, from Catholics to liberals and democrats, believed in the idea of a natural friendship between these two peoples, and many tight links had been established.

In truth, attention had also been paid to Russia, especially since the period between the 1760's and 1780's, corresponding to what has been defined by Venturi as the "first crisis of the Ancien Regime." (4) Intellectuals, travelers, representatives of the Enlightenment--as well as freemasons--concurred in guiding public opinion, much beyond the Italian Peninsula's natural boundaries. And in fact it had been precisely the great distance that separated Italy from Russia that had contributed, between the 18th and 19th century, to the frequently favorable attitude of that Power to Italy, unlike other neighboring countries such as France or the Habsburg Empire. (5)

At any rate, interest in Russia had remained in Italy, with great attention being paid to the initially ambitious foreign policy of Alexander I, deliberately resonant with the slogans of liberalism, constitution, nationality, and in which Italy had played not a secondary role. But naturally enthusiasms had considerably cooled since the era of Nicholas I, the supporter of monarchy and of the policies of the Holy Alliance. (6)

Italy would again start to pay great attention to the Tsarist Empire at the moment of the creation of a unitary Italian state, but on the threshold of the 1848 uprising, a growing number of people were becoming concerned about the potential pressure from the Tsarist giant. Above all, the repression of the Polish uprising, affecting a nation towards which Italians had a long-standing sympathy, created deep concern.

As for the Vatican, it was favorable in principle to a people that had made Catholicism one of its symbols. But there was also uncertainty: Gregory XVI was concerned with the preservation of order and was also a friend of Catholic Austria--itself often, in those years, a friend of Russia. On the one hand he felt the need to protect the Catholic Poles from Tsarist pressure, not least because the Polish revolutionaries appeared to the Pope to be more sensitive to religion and more moderate than others. On the other hand, the Pope couldn't venture too far and openly show his sympathies because the Poles were allied de facto with other lay representatives of the revolutionary movement. (7) The situation would not change too much with Pius IX, notwithstanding initial appearances; with the outbreak of the 1848 revolution, any illusion would come to an end.

As for the liberal Catholics such as Silvio Pellico and Vincenzo Gioberti, we can see a more openly favorable attitude to Poland. Their attitude recalled that expressed by Niccolo Tommaseo in 1835 in his *Poland and Rome*, a work in which the author complained of the Pope's behavior on the Polish question. For these Catholics, Poland represented indeed not only a country of key importance, to which went their sympathy, but also showed that it was possible to find a third path "between conservative clericalism and rationalist

democracy," and to reconcile "faith and liberty, progress and order." (8) However, the support of such people could generally be felt more on a moral level rather than on a political one.

Gioberti, in particular, believed that the ensemble of Slav peoples could bring new energy to Europe, but warned in his *Il Primato degli Italiani* (1843) of the danger represented by the possible appeal of Russia and by Panslavism, which made use of ideological elements such as linguistical and racial affinity, or such as Orthodoxy and anti-Papal sentiment, but in practice represented yet again the old Tsarist push southwards. For these reasons he unhesitatingly attributed Poland with the mission of leading the other Slav peoples, thus playing an intermediary role between the Vatican and Orthodox Slavs. And when, in December 1848, Gioberti briefly led the Piedmontese government, he indeed drew up a broad policy framework for all East-Central Europe. In particular the Piedmontese, in agreement with Polish emigres, would soon try to persuade intransigent Magyar nationalists to recognise that the other nations of the Empire should have the same equality of rights that they insisted on for themselves.

The position of liberals such as Cavour or D'Azeglio were not so very different. But even among these people ideas were often still vague and rather confused. In particular, the supporters of Cavour in 1848 emphasized the impressive "mass" constituted by Slavs in Europe. Numerous, brave but oppressed, those peoples wanted to adopt the "right and noble" (9) cause of nation and liberty--a cause that therefore could not fail. The Slav nationalities of the Habsburg Empire and of the Balkan peninsula had an important place in the liberals' geopolitical scenario--one that Italy considered in perspective crucial for her own future, and from which resounded a call for "nationality and liberty" to which Italy of the Risorgimento couldn't be insensitive. The main goal of Cavour, in this context, was to prepare a great "Slavo-liberal bulwark" that Europe had to build to safeguard herself from Russian pressure. In particular it was necessary to prevent the institution of a link with Russia by the Poles, deceived by so many promises and so many defections by the Powers, otherwise a great danger loomed over Italian civilization, with the concrete risk that Europe could be "made Cossack." (10)

At any rate, while underground contacts with Balkan-Danubian Slavs were intensified, the fear of going too far and of provoking undesired repercussions on the diplomatic level induced liberals to act with great prudence and on the level of sympathy and solidarity, collecting funds in favor of the martyr nation. The situation was too delicate to risk stirring up Russia's and the Powers' hostility by compromising themselves and appearing too friendly with revolutionary elements. There was indeed a degree of perplexity with regard to a people such as the Poles: on one side strongly Catholic, on the other

with a revolutionary reputation. Finally, among the liberals there was a recurrent skepticism concerning the democrats' analysis that placed too great an emphasis on a possible Polish role as intermediaries between Italy and Bohemian and Croatian Slavs.

In fact, the liveliest hopes and the most intense contacts with the Slavs came from the side of the democrats who had established a long-standing network with the various European emigres. It was exactly from these circles that there had come the idea of an Italian initiative independent of diplomacy and foreign Powers' interests or support. The new nationalists no longer based their hopes on the more or less supposed "liberalism" of a sovereign: Mazzini's Young Italy was of a republican and democratic orientation. Also here we feel the echoes of old sympathies of the Enlightenment for virgin and fresh peoples, and also for a Russia of which a representative of that epoch, Francesco Algarotti, had spoken in such positive terms, predicting a great future, although experience of the first half of the 19th century had led to a better knowledge of the Tsarist Empire's repressive capacity. Rather, it was possible to make in this case the classic distinction between people and sovereign, making the most of the underground Russia of revolutionaries and emigres. Recently dismembered Poland, also thanks to the great activity of her exiles, appeared as an essential reference for the growth of liberty and equality in all East-Central Europe.

In this climate arose the Giuseppi Mazzini phenomenon. (11) He was one of the first great modern Europeanists: the European ideal was very strong in him and was inseparable from his ideal of Nation-People; in his political thought the two terms were reciprocally giving substance and truth. In the new lay European idea he advocated for, to cancel the old, conceived as Respublica Christiana, all the Young Nations whose movements he fostered--beginning naturally with Young Italy, to arrive to the movements of Slavic nationalities such as Young Serbia, but also non-Slavic such as Young Hungary, Young Romania, and so on--would now fully accomplish their ideal only with the establishment of Young Europe. In his mind, the highest interest and aim of all national movements, inspired by the same ideals, was to arrive at full cooperation in building a New Europe, different and opposed to the Ancien Regime multinational Empires.

In conclusion, Mazzini was a great bourgeois and nationalist thinker of the Risorgimento. He conceived the nation in humanitarian terms and didn't give it an absolute value. He believed in mankind's unity, in a sort of lay religious renewal: for him the new Christ was the collectivity, the messianic and free people, inspired by a unique thought and a unique love. Humanity was the motherland's union: each nation had a mission, and to be able to accomplish

it, it had to be free. In the future "European citizenship," each "national citizenship" would be realized at the highest level.

In this outlook, Italy's mission was that of the Third Rome--the People's Rome--a program with a social background because in the feudal world, with its sovereign territories, it wasn't possible to accomplish such a society of "peoples by language and by state," free and equal. And naturally the new Nations-States on which the Continent would be based would be so much more vigorous and strong as the more they would be homogeneous and nationally conscious.

Since his youth, Mazzini had placed his hopes in the emergence of Slavic peoples and especially on the Poles. Since 1832, after the repression of the Thirties uprising, the disappointment provoked by France, which seemed to fail the mission that history had given her, had encouraged his development of the theme of an Italo-Polish "brotherhood." (12) In fact, among the Slavic nationalities, it was precisely the Poles who were the best known in the West and who could then be seen as the most similar to the Italians because of many common elements: Catholic roots, strong love for classical culture and romantic patriotism, experiences lived during the Napoleonic epoch, that in both peoples stirred up firstly the memory of a great past and secondly so many expectations that were soon deceived; similar also in the common goal of national unification, that for both peoples presupposed the crisis of the Vienna Congress system and the defeat of the common Austrian enemy. (13)

Notwithstanding the failure of the uprising--a failure in front of the "European cabinets" that in fact had become "victory" in front of the peoples, exposing the Great Powers' incapacity or unwillingness to intervene in aid--in the movement of the Risorgimento the potentialities of this people were considered to be great because of its crucial geopolitical position for the Continental balance. (14) A nation with a great history and consciousness, that in Mazzini's thought could be opposed to the other big Slavic nation, Russia, which instead oscillated dangerously between civilization and barbarism, and for whom, developing themes that would be for a long time used by European imagery in the 19th century, he saw rather a destiny in the role of "civiliser" of Asia, not least to discharge in that direction the Tsarist giant's energies. Just as Turkey, Russia also appeared to him to be characterized by too many Asiatic elements to be able to enter by full right his Young Europe.

In short, for Poland things were different: in his Slavic Letters, (15) Mazzini took up a position that had been widely propagandized by Polish emigres: "the Slavic movement's initiative clearly belongs to the Polish center." In

Poland "lives, suffers, agitates the core ... of the militant Slavic Church: it's from Poland that probably will start the password that will change the slow, solemn movement of all the sister tribes." (16) These were the themes of the "little Panslavism" which aimed at a federation, or at least at a coordination between the Slavs around Poland, excluding the Tsarist Empire, naturally, if it had maintained its autocratic and imperialistic character.

In short, Mazzini supported an active and constant Italo-Polish cooperation, carefully aimed at striking the key Powers of the Holy Alliance and first of all Vienna. A concerted action between the two peoples would attack the Empire from different sides, on both fronts; and this not only to arrive at the two nations' full independence--their concerted initiative would encourage all the other East-Central European nations' involvement and "fraternization." (17) But there was also an anti-Tsarist function, and here the common messianic spirit made him feel a brother with Polish poet-prophets such as Mickiewicz, who since 1844 at the College de France proclaimed that Poland and Russia "are not two territories, but two ideas, perpetually fighting, thrown between Slavic peoples." In their confrontation for hegemony, they "have generated two religions, two languages, two alphabets, two diametrically-opposed forms of government, and tend to dominate ... over all the North and perhaps over the entire world." (18)

For Mazzini there was no doubt: Poland is the "hearth and home of the Slavic race," "irradiates faith and spirit of life till the far branches of the race." Today she appears defeated, dead, but "each of us feels that it isn't so.... Prophet, today, of Slavonia, she will be tomorrow standard-bearer," (19) champion of little democratic Panslavism against the autocratic Russian one. Mazzini thus invited other peoples to "imitate Poland," whose insurrections offered a "collective service because they had made impossible the collective intervention against those who wished to imitate her." (20)

But there were also critical remarks: the democratic-religious Mazzini was perplexed when confronted with a Polish national movement that often appeared divided and wavering between two poles. On the one side were the moderate religious elements inspired by a conservative Catholicism that Mazzini hated--they were "born dead," they worked on "an exhausted principle ...; from Papal Rome" could not come a "word of liberty"; the Vatican was a "power that the Italian revolution will ... overturn." On the other side were the democrats who for Mazzini were more and more materialistic and less inspired by passionate ideals: they lacked "really organic beliefs"; they nursed the "germs of dissolution." And, especially for the bourgeois Mazzini many Poles were too aristocratic. There now had to grow "a new Poland of the people and the of the liberty of conscience, the Poland of progress and

not the Poland of dead centuries," with a "really national and popular" program. (21)

In short, for Mazzini the Slavic Risorgimento road was already drawn. It was a Risorgimento on which he placed too much stock: thinking both to the European revolution and to his Italy, he was too confident in an insurrection also in the Balkan-Danubian area and, trusting the emigres' information, tended to underestimate the general political unpreparedness, the deep dissensions between the peoples of the zone and between the Slavs themselves. Instead, he clearly noticed the centrality of the agrarian question that was too often considered to be of secondary importance by the aristocratic Polish revolutionaries. Without a solution of the social question, the Polish masses would become an easy prey to German, Austrian, and Russian demagogery. So the Poles had to unite with the more radical movements of theatres that were relevant for them, such as the Balkans, Adriatic and Italy. "You need a movement in Galicia, a movement in Serbia, a movement toward Venice." (22) Italian democrats "are in contact with the Serbian Nationalist Party, you have to unite with them and with us." And, after the failure of the Polish insurrection of 1863, "help us with your language, your agents, in our propaganda in Hungary, Bohemia, Croatia, Serbia." Italians and "Slavic brothers for emancipation" shared a common cause.

Indeed, since the southern arena was now in ferment, the most precious allies were the Balkan Slavs, tempered by their anti-Turkish fight. And, reborn around the Kosovo myth, Serbia would become the Slavic "Piedmont" and was searching for her "Slavic Garibaldi." (23)

Mazzini believed that the Poles could act as intermediaries between other Slavs and the West; he asked them for texts, documents, information on the "important entire Slavic movement, that is little known." He was curious especially about the southern Slavs and desired to have a better knowledge of their national and intellectual movement. (24) The other Slavs of the Habsburg Empire--"Czechs, Slovaks, Ruthenes, Wends"--represent "more than half of the Empire population," and assert their nationality with "literary and political works" that Europe would have to know. (25) For him, their movement had to be linked with the Polish and Greek ones. Certainly, in 1847 he looked to them as courageous and brave, but lodged between European civilization and eastern barbarism. In the final analysis, he was an optimist since he considered the southern Slavs to be already conscious of their own strength--which was the exact reason that Russia tried to attract them and Austria to divide them. Mazzini believed that their internal divisions would be reduced as a result of the progressive growth in their strength and confidence.

Mazzini believed that the Slavic "Risorgimento"--and the national movements in that area that had to cooperate in the common task--should not take place without Italy or against her interests for ideological, geographical and commercial reasons. The "Third Rome" had to find allies to prevent the predominance of a Germanic Central Europe and a Russian East. The first goal was to destroy Austria which "in Europe's universal movement" represented "immobility," "inertness," "death"--an "anomaly in the 19th century." The young nations would be grateful to those who had really helped them: for these reason Italy had to cease its constantly changing and ad hoc diplomatic efforts and instead engage itself thoroughly in that sector of Europe and contribute actively to a total renewal of that part of the "Young Europe" he dreamt of. (26)

Besides, when Italy would strongly engage herself in the anti-Austrian crusade, she would be immediately linked with all the insurrections fermenting in East-Central Europe. Thus, she wouldn't stop at the goal of Venice:

Our war is the last war for obtaining never-ending peace conditions;

it's a great war worthy of us, that, beginning under Italian

patronage the redrawing of the European map, could pose us as

leaders of an alliance of peoples and of a new Epoch of

civilization, ... this war is fought in the East ... stirring up

the Romanians, the Magyars and the Slavs. (27)

Thus, Italy would lead Slavic peoples to liberty and independence.

But while before 1848 Panslavism seemed to him a long-term design, needing to be achieved in a "little Slav" sense, by 1871 it had become a doctrine strongly adopted by the Tsarist Empire. In his International Politics, Mazzini expressed an acute fear of a link between Russia and other Slavs that could lead to the creation of "Cossack" Europe. Therefore, East-Central European peoples, placed between Germanism and Tsarism, had the fundamental task of being a bulwark between "Pan-Muscovitism" and Pan-Germanism. (28)

In short, in the Italian democrats' outlook in the decades around 1848 there developed a sort of "geopolitical" vision of Europe's destiny, the historical role of her peoples, and the process of freeing her from tyranny. Mazzini was this vision's main interpreter and propagandizer. His hugely idealistic thinking,

paying so little heed to political logic and ministerial bonds, allows us to comprehend some of the more hidden--but constant--aspects of the main political guidelines of the foreign policy that so many representatives of Italian democracy and radicalism adopted. Even Mussolini himself, a revolutionary and "movementist," was a great reader and admirer of Mazzini. From all this emerges a "model" that exposes its illogic and naivete when faced with the facts.

In those years--and also later, when Poland and Italy, having surmounted the trials of 1866, found themselves in substantially different relationships--Mazzini linked each people's success to its neighbor's fortune, in general a palingenesis that, finally, could also succeed in redeeming and liberating those peoples that today seemed to have undertaken the historical task of supporting the reactionary aristocracies in the preservation of the old order. Since France's revolutionary fervor now appeared to be exhausted, it was up to Poland (which was ready for this role) and even more for Italy to break the equilibrium preserved by the conservative Powers. Russia, Austria (although at times the specific roles of the Habsburg Empire, the Prussians and the Germanic peoples generally seemed to be too little distinguished in his thoughts) and the Ottomans had to be brought to reason by the western, central and southern Slavs' revival. It would them, with their own young and uncorrupted energies, who would strike the fatal blow to the European conservative system, under the connected leadership of the two key nations, of course. And this general commotion would surely raise the irredentism of the disperse elements of the Hellenic world--crucial to the Balkans--provoking a pincer movement against the conservative block from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. So, along with Italy, Poland would be assigned a great task among the nations: to seize the moment to "unify their initiative in a fraternal way," with Italy's efforts addressed to the southern Slavs and Poland's addressed to the northern Slavs. (29)

The Poles, then, were acting wrongly when exploring agreements with Turkey: they had Slavic blood, they were "brothers of the men that inhabit and claim for themselves the earth they fecundate in Bosnia, in Herzegovina, in Montenegro, in the Serbian countries. These ... Slavs will arise ... in the name of the Right you call for, in the name of a tradition that is yours, in the name of a life for what the time has come." Mazzini went on to reinforce the point: will the Poles fight

for the Crescent against the Cross, for Fatalism
against Liberty,

for Immobility against Progress, for the Fact against
the Right,

for the foreign conquest against autonomous work's rights, for Asia

against Europe? Will you sacrifice the cradle to the grave? ...

Poland will be the elder sister of the common mother that the world calls Slavia, or she will not be.

He continues:

The Tsar knows that: that's why he tries ... to take possession of a

movement that otherwise will go along a current hostile to Tsarism.

It's to you, Poles, to unveil the play, replacing it. Put yourself

decidedly to the vanguard of the Slavic movement, be the Crusade leaders. (30)

Here we see the vocations of the two emergent great nations--Italy and Poland--also defined at a geopolitical level. Having freed their areas of influence from the Germanic (or Austrian), Russian and Ottoman reactionary grasp, they could finally exert their mastership of liberty and progress on the young neighboring peoples, along guidelines that appear as established over the centuries by their history: Poland, especially to the little Slav nations, in its capacity as a pioneer, the first of them in the impulse toward liberty and self-sacrifice; Italy on the Balkans that for centuries, across the adriatic Sea, appeared as a natural outlet to the cradle of European civilization, to the most ancient "nation," born much before her unitary State. The Italian and Slavic spirit would dig an abyss under Austria, joining with the Greeks to overthrow the Turkish yoke. (31)

The Slavs, stressed Mazzini, were 78 million strong, inhabiting a compact zone going from the Germanic frontiers to the Volga and through the Cossack territories to the Caspian Sea. Their influence was already perceivable and would become increasingly strong when the four groups into which he believed the Slavic stock would be divided--"Russian, Polish, Bohemian and South Slavic"--"would be constituted on Europe and Asia." (32) The Slavs would drag in their irresistible movement the non-Slavic populations living in East-Central Europe, and the great movement so aroused would lead to Austrian and Turkish destruction. This would be possible because in respect to the Slavs--compact, numerous, young, and eager to constitute themselves in Nations--the Austrian Empire was "an administration, not a State," and Turkey was a "foreign encampment isolated in territories that were not its

own, without communion of faith, tradition, tendencies, activities." (33) As far as Russia was concerned, a composite ensemble of peoples from whom still had to emerge other young nations, there would return the idea of its "Asiatic" destiny in a colossal process of colonization of Siberia and the Islamic world--the world of "fatalism."

Here was the common goal for Italians and Slavs: to destroy two Empires representing the embodiment of the Spirit of Evil, of tyranny--Turkey and Austria--that oppress Europe and deny a peoples' right to conscience and life. For that reason it was right and necessary to constitute in prospect a single Action party "with brotherly hands extended to different neighbors." Mazzini declared: "Our goal is your goal. We have from God and from European conditions the same great mission. Your parties have to mingle in one, the Action Party. You Hungarians, you have to extend a brotherly hand to Romanians, to Slavs; you Serbians, to Romanians and Hellenes." (34)

As history would show, the great democratic revolutionary ideas were largely noble illusions: the difficulties in applying Mazzinian models to Eastern countries were surely enormous. But Mazzini's equation of Nation = People contains, among others, a particular difficulty: his Risorgimental conception of the nation didn't offer easy solutions to the problems of minorities. For him, as we have seen, the nation was homogeneous--the citizens had to have the same culture. Therefore, there wasn't a place for those who were different from an ethnic or cultural viewpoint. In fact, if compared with many European peoples of the time, and especially the East-Central ones, the Italian peninsula had little experience with problems of ethnic minorities. On the other hand, Italy had been the first country in Europe to begin, centuries before, a unifying process at the cultural level. But paradoxically, in the 19th century Italy--so different, yet also engaged in national state building--played a very important role in offering a model and a political philosophy especially to those East-Central European peoples that had yet to accomplish their own Risorgimento, and were characterized by an ethnical structure in "leopard spots" to which it was very difficult to apply without traumatic implications Mazzini's concept of an ethnically homogeneous nation.

Poland would soon see in Turkey a useful enemy of the Habsburg and Russian Empires and finally would find herself in a position far from, or at least indifferent, to the Italian one. Magyar nationalism, often double-edged, always tempted by hegemony, would remain a problem for all the peoples subjected to the Hungarian Crown, and a heavy obstacle to the basic aspiration of equality among peoples. The founding character of the Latin heritage for the Romanian people couldn't ever be reduced to a superficial patina on which the Slavic dimension would have to prevail. And the same was obviously valid for the Magyars, as much convinced of their "diversity" in

respect to those Slavs with which the minority Magyar and Romanian element would, in Mazzini's point of view, have to finally adapt themselves to live together and share values and aims. But the tendency of the Slavs themselves to split and fight amongst themselves would soon become clear, also beyond Muscovite imperialism.

In conclusion, the "democratic" model would show from the beginning many incoherences and naivetes, but its general lines would continue to appear in Italian foreign policies toward East-Central and Balkan Europe, at least until Italy became preoccupied with the idea of developing a "Great Power" foreign policy.

NOTES

(1.) On Italian attitudes toward the Slavic question, see the still very useful W. Giusti, *Mazzini e gli Slavi* (Varese-Milano, 1940); A. Anzilotti, *Italiani e Jugoslavi nel Risorgimento* (Roman, 1920); G. Berti, *Russia e Stati italiani nel Risorgimento* (Torino, 1957); G. Petracchi, *Da San Pietroburgo a Mosca. La diplomazia italiana in Russia* (Roma, 1993); Id., *La Russia rivoluzionaria nella politica italiana. 1917-1925* (Bari, 1982), and Bianca Valota, *L'Italia e la Russia degli zar* (under press in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie si Arheologie Alexandru Xenopol [Jasi]*, with the included bibliography.) See also more generally A. Tamborra, *L'Europa Centro-orientale nei secoli XIX e XX* (Milan, 1971), *passim*.

(2.) *Delle speranze d'Italia* (Turin, 1844).

(3.) Petracchi, *La Russia rivoluzionaria*, p. XV.

(4.) See the subheading--*La prima crisi dell'Antico Regime 1768-1776*--given by F. Venturi to the 3rd volume of his *Settecento riformatore*, 4 vol. (Turin, 1969-1984).

(5.) See Berti, *op. cit.*

(6.) See Valota, *L'Italia e la Russia degli zar*.

(7.) On the relationships between Poles, Italian Catholics and the Pope, see K. Morawski, "Gli studi sul Risorgimento in Polonia," *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, Nov.-Dec., 1934.

(8.) Giusti, *Mazzini e gli Slavi*, p. 36.

(9.) On Cavour's discourse given on 20 October 1848 to the Piedmontese Parliament, see Tamborra, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

(10.) See Cavour's newspaper *Il Risorgimento*, 3 May 1848.

(11.) On Mazzini's attitude toward the Slavic question, see in addition to the works cited in Note 1 above, A. Lewak, "Mazzini e l'emigrazione polacca," *Il Risorgimento italiano* XVII, No. 4 (1924), and K. Morawski, *Polacy i sprawy polska w dziejach Italii* (Warszaw, 1937). Mazzini wrote much about these problems; see Mazzini, *Lettere Slave* (Bari, 1939) that collects his main writings on the subject, but also the volumes of his *Scritti editi ed inediti*, vols. I-XXXVIII (Imola, 1906-1918) and those of the National edition.

(12.) See the interesting comments on the correspondence between Mazzini and Lelewel on this subject in Lewak, op. cit.

(13.) See Giusti, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

(14.) See Lewak, op. cit., and Giusti, op. cit., p. 42.

(15.) *Lettere Slave*.

(16.) Mazzini, *Del moto nazionale slavo*, Nat. ed., vol. XXVI, pp. 131 and 181.

(17.) Mazzini, *Polonia e Italia*, Nat. ed., vol. LXXV, pp. 156-157 and 161.

(18.) Cited in Tamborra, op. cit., p. 87.

(19.) Mazzini, *Del moto nazionale slavo*.

(20.) Mazzini, *Polonia e Italia*, Nat. ed., vol. LXXV, pp. 156-157 and 161.

(21.) See the interesting comments on the correspondence between Mazzini and Lelewel on this subject in Lewak, op. cit.

(22.) Mazzini, *Un mot sur la question polonaise*, Nat. ed., vol. VII, pp. 231.

(23.) Cited in Tamborra, op. cit., p. 88. More generally, see Anzilotti, *Italiani e Jugoslavi nel Risorgimento*.

(24.) See Lewak, op. cit.

(25.) Mazzini, *The European Question*, Nat. ed., vol. XXXIV, p. 15.

(26.) Mazzini, *Lettere Slave*, Nat. ed., vol. LIX, pp. 15-16.

(27.) Mazzini, *Le due guerre*, in *Scritti editi ed inediti*, vol. XIV, pp. 195-196. *Ibidem*, see also *Missioni italiane, Vita internazionale*.

(28.) Mazzini, Politica Internazionale, in Scritti editi ed inediti, vol. XVI.

(29.) Mazzini, Polonia e Italia.

(30.) See the letter sent by Mazzini to General Mieroslawski dated 9 November 1863, cited in Lewak, op. cit.

(31.) See Mazzini, Polonia e Italia; see also On the Slavonian National Movement, Nat. ed., vol. XXXVI, p. 133, and Lenere Slave, Nat. ed., vol. LIX, p. 24.

(32.) Mazzini, Missione italiana, Vita internazionale, p. 205.

(33.) Mazzini, Politica Internazionale, pp. 149-150.

(34.) Mazzini, Ai patrioti della Serbia e dell'Ungheria, in Nat. ed., vol. LXXV, p. 212.

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